

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Previously Presented) A process for the preparation of a microencapsulated composition containing at least one lipophilic compound comprising:

- (i) particle size reduction of the lipophilic compound, in the presence of a surface active agent, to provide a first composition;
- (ii) providing a solution of alkali metal alginate;
- (iii) combining said first composition and the alkali metal alginate solution to provide a second composition;
- (iv) adding dropwise the second composition to a solution containing Ca^{2+} , thereby obtaining beadlets, and removing the formed beadlets from said solution;
- (v) rinsing the beadlets with an acidic solution and drying said beadlets to obtain dried beadlets; and
- (vi) coating the dried beadlets with a coating material to obtain microcapsules containing said lipophilic compound.

2. (Original) A process according to claim 1, wherein the particle size of the lipophilic compound is reduced to a particle size not greater than 20 μm .

3. (Original) A process according to claim 2 wherein the particle size of the lipophilic compound is reduced to a particle size not greater than 10 μm .

4. (Original) A process according to claim 1, wherein the alkali metal alginate is sodium or potassium alginate.

5. (Original) A process according to claim 1 wherein a filler is added to stage (i).

6. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 1, wherein the lipophilic compound is selected from the group consisting of lycopene, beta and alpha-carotene, lutein, astaxanthin, zeaxanthin, vitamin A, vitamin E, vitamin D, omega 3 oils, omega 6 oils and mixtures thereof.

7. (Original) A process according to claim 1 wherein a filler is added to stage (ii).

8. (Original) A process according to claim 1, wherein the lipophilic compound containing alginate beadlets are in the size range of 100 to 425 μm .

9. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 1 wherein the acidic solution is an acidic aqueous solution of an acid selected from the group consisting of citric, aspartic, acetic, ascorbic, lactic, phosphoric and hydrochloric acids.

10. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 1 wherein the coating material applied in stage (vi) is selected from the group consisting of cellulose derivatives, waxes, fats, proteins and polysaccharides.

11. (Original) A process according to claim 10 wherein the cellulose derivative is hydroxypropylcellulose.

12. (Previously Presented) A process according to claim 1 wherein size reduction of stage (i) is carried out in a liquid medium wherein said liquid medium is water or a water miscible liquid.

13. (Original) A microencapsulated composition comprising of one or more lipophilic compounds enveloped by a surfactant agent, encapsulated in an alginate matrix and further coated with an outer coating, wherein the particle size of the lipophilic substance is not greater than 20 μm .

14. (Previously Presented) A composition according to claim 13 wherein the lipophilic compound is selected from

the group consisting of lycopene, beta and alpha-carotene, lutein, astaxanthin, zeaxanthin, vitamin A, vitamin E, vitamin D, omega 3 oils, omega 6 oils and mixtures thereof.

15. (Original) A composition according to claim 13 wherein the particle size of the lipophilic compound is not greater than 10 μm .

16. (Original) A composition according to claim 15 wherein the particle size not greater than 5 μm .

17. (Original) A composition according to claim 13 wherein the size of the microcapsules is in the range of 50 μm to 950 μm .

18. (Original) A composition according to claim 17 wherein the size of the microcapsules is in the range of 100 μm to 450 μm .

19. (Original) A composition according to claim 13 comprising 0.1% to 40% of a lipophilic compound or mixtures thereof.

20. (Previously Presented) A composition according to claim 13 wherein the outer coating is a material selected from the group consisting of cellulose derivatives, waxes, fats, proteins and polysaccharides.

21. (Previously Presented) A composition according to claim 19 wherein the outer coating is hydroxypropyl-cellulose.

22. (Original) A composition according to claim 13 wherein said composition is tablet grade.

23. (Original) A method for incorporating lipophilic compounds in food stuff comprising of encapsulating the lipophilic compound according to the process of claim 1 and adding the encapsulated composition to food stuff.

24. (Original) A method for masking the flavor and/or smell of lipophilic compounds comprising encapsulating the lipophilic compound according to the process of claim 1.

25. (Currently Amended) A process for preparing a microencapsulated composition containing at least one liquid lipophilic compound, comprising:

(i) particle size reduction of the liquid lipophilic compound, in the presence of a surface active agent, and optimally optionally a filler in a liquid medium of (1) water, (2) a water-miscible liquid, or (3) a mixture of water and a water-miscible liquid, thereby providing a suspension or emulsion wherein the particle size of the lipophilic compound is not greater than 10 μm ;

(ii) providing a solution of an alkali metal alginate optionally containing a filler;

(iii) combining said suspension or emulsion and the solution of alkali metal alginate to provide a second suspension or emulsion;

(iv) adding dropwise the second suspension or emulsion to a solution containing Ca^{2+} thereby obtaining beadlets in liquid, said beadlets having a second coating thereon, and removing said beadlets from said liquid;

(v) rinsing said beadlets with an acidic solution and drying said beadlets to obtain dried beadlets;

(vi) coating the dried beadlets with a coating material to provide a third coating, thereby obtaining microcapsules of 100-450 μm in particle size containing said lipophilic compound, wherein said microcapsules comprise said second and third coatings.